



**Rachel Carson Reserve
Local Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 04, 2013, 3-5p**

LAC Members	Affiliation/Interest	Present
Mr. Perry Barrow	Community Member	No
Mr. Charles Burgess	Town of Beaufort	No
Ms. Ann Carter	Community Member	Yes
Mr. John Fussell	Community Member	Yes
Ms. Margaret Garner	Community Member	Yes
Chief Steve Lewis	Beaufort Police Department	Yes
Mr. Randy Newman	Fort Macon State Park	No
Ms. Robin Newton	Reserve Volunteer	Yes
Dr. Dan Rittschoff	Duke University Marine Lab	No
Mr. Stanley Rule	Community Member	Yes
Mr. Ben Wunderly	North Carolina Maritime Museum - Beaufort	Yes
Others in Attendance		
Paula Gillikin	DCM, Central Sites Manager	Yes
Sarah Spiegler	DCM, Reserve Volunteer	Yes
Rett Newton	General Public	Yes

Reserve Update (Paula Gillikin)

- The Reserve will soon be hiring two temporary contract positions, an Environmental Educator in the Wilmington office and a Communications Specialist to be based in the Beaufort office. The communications staff person will focus on the Reserve website, social media, and public relations campaigns related to visitor use issues at several of the Reserve sites.

Site Update - Old Business (Paula Gillikin)

- An update was provided on signs installed since the fall 2012 local advisory committee meeting.

- A summary of accomplishments to date was provided for the Wild Horse Public Education campaign.

Site Update - New Business (Paula Gillikin)

- A Town Marsh nature trail improvement project is underway. New wooden markers have been installed. A self guided trail brochure will soon be published.
- Planned educational activities for the summer include Summer Science School (in partnership with the Maritime Museum) and a general public field trip series.
- Accessing the Carrot Island boardwalk is becoming increasingly difficult due to erosion at the entryway to the structure. The Reserve would like to pursue a cost-effective quick repair or modification that would address the problem.
- The feral horse herd is currently at 33-head with 18 females (including 1 foal) and 15 males. A two-year activity budget study of the herd was completed recently. Revision of the horse management plan will begin after the activity budget study analysis has been completed.
- Margaret Garner provided an update about her research project focused on using remote sensing to delineate the presence and changes in particular coastal habitats such as high and low marshlands.
- John Fussell gave an overview of International Shorebird Surveys that will be conducted at the Rachel Carson Reserve in April and May.
- Wilson's plover nesting areas on Bird Shoal will be delineated at the end of April/beginning of May.
- Cameras will be deployed on-site (in areas where horses are often concentrated) to help characterize the interactions between visitors and horses. This was also done last year by an intern. The results will indicate whether or not the main horse watering hole needs to be off-limits to visitors.
- An overview of the preliminary findings of the Middle Marsh oyster restoration study (UNC-IMS) was given. The long-term goal of the research is to come up with a set of best management practices for oyster restoration.

Member Roundtable and Other Comments

- Members are very interested in how nearby dredging affects water flow and sediment transport around the Reserve. It was suggested that a marine geologist be added to the committee to provide this perspective.
- Ann Carter suggested that the Beaufort Business Association be engaged regarding the Wild Horse Public Education campaign. She also suggested working with the Town's recreation committee to post messages at waterfront access points.
- Robin Newton thought it would be useful for a Beaufort Policeman to patrol the reserve on foot for a few hours on the weekend each month. A good location would be Bird Shoal, where dogs

are frequently off-leash. Ann commented that should would follow-up on this with the Town administration.

- Members discussed Ann's concern of the public frequently using the site as a restroom and agreed that there is no easy solution. Composting toilets are likely not an option, as they could be in conflict with the reserve's governing precepts.
- Members liked the idea of revising and improving the self-guided trail brochure, but acknowledged that providing them on-site will result in some misuse of the brochures. It was suggested that mobile technology applications could be used to enhance the trail interpretive experience. It was agreed that trail brochures should be given to area businesses, particularly ferry services.
- Steve Lewis stressed the importance of providing ferry operators with information to give their customers. Ferry operators can give customers this information verbally during transport. Paula will be sending out an updated version of this information to all local businesses and tour guides, soon.
- The committee discussed what will happen to visitation at the Rachel Carson Reserve when the Park Service implements its new ferry concession. The companies that do not get a Park Service contract may start bringing visitors to the reserve. Members are concerned about impacts of this anticipated increase in visitation. Paula explained that Reserve staff is taking measures to begin formally tracking this type of commercial use.
- Members thought it was a good idea to install additional placename and visitor use guidelines signs along Bird Shoal where visitation is heaviest during the weekends.
- To address the access issue at the Carrot Island boardwalk, Stan Rule suggested removing a small section of the railing on the side of the structure (near the entryway) so that people can access the boardwalk more easily. Members agreed this was a viable solution.

Public Comments

- Rett Newton commented that a fire/police boat could be used to occasionally patrol around the reserve to help address visitor use issues. Ann Carter suggested that, even though it has been proposed several times, approval and purchase of a vessel would probably not happen soon.
- Rett reported that he has seen more cormorants over-wintering around the reserve than in the recent past.

Meeting follow up

Paula Gillikin will keep the committee informed of any significant issues that arise at the site. She will also follow up to schedule a fall 2013 meeting date.